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ABSTRACT

This conference paper on assessment of the qualities of student teachers in middle schools discusses the concepts of authentic assessment, continuous evaluation, the roles of the cooperating teacher and the university coordinator, and assessment procedures used at the University of Northern Iowa. Eleven categories are presented for use in determining, at mid-term of the student teaching experience, whether a student teacher is meeting the requirements to become an effective teacher. These are: knowledge of content and skills areas, knowledge of learners/learning process, use of instructional planning strategies, use of instructional strategies/teaching styles, use of management and discipline strategies, use of communication strategies, use of assessing/diagnosing/evaluating strategies, use of motivation strategies, use of problem-solving/decision making strategies, use of human relations strategies, and professional characteristics/personal qualities. For the final evaluation, the cooperating teacher assesses the student's skills and competencies, classroom management, areas needing improvement, character and personality, and prediction for success. The certification standards of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards are outlined. A sample lesson plan for teaching computer and research skills to seventh graders is appended. (JDD)

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A Report on the Assessment Procedures Used in the Evaluation of Student Teaching At the Middle School Level

Presented at the
Fourth Academic Exchange Conference
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Thank you, _____. Honored guests, esteemed colleagues, friends. It is indeed a privilege for me to bring greetings on behalf of the University of Northern Iowa, the College of Education and the Department of Teaching. This is a very special moment for me to be invited to return to Dalian on the occasion of the Fourth Academic Exchange Meeting. This is a very important occasion for my university as we continue to explore ways to work together. To study and research in China is a prospect that has intrigued Americans for more than a century.

I told you when I was here at the 40th Anniversary celebration that my own interest was piqued when as a child in the fourth grade, age nine, in a one-room school house in a rural part of the United States, my teacher showed me a picture of China's Great Wall, the Wan Li Chang Cheng. I can still remember that page in my faded blue social studies book, and how I marveled that something built in the 5th Century B.C. would be still standing "snaking its way across the tops of the mountains" in the 20th century.

One of my graduate students at UNLV, Xong Hu, from East China Normal University in Shanghai tells me that in China you have a saying, "You will not be a great man if you do not visit the Great Wall." I understand that to mean that to be a successful person you must visit Wan Li Chang Cheng. I am happy to have that opportunity. In the United States we say, "If you want to visit the bread basket of America, you must visit Iowa."

When I was here in the summer of 1993 I was working at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas; now, I have moved to Iowa where I am working at the University of Northern Iowa. My topic for today is to share with you what is happening in the United States in the areas of the promotion of qualities for middle school teachers. We talk of this issue as assessment. We understand that in China the teacher is called "the engineer of the soul" and I come from the University of Northern Iowa where they say, "Great Teaching Makes the Difference!" So, let us explore the idea together of what makes a great teacher.

Background

There is a movement in the United States toward evaluating the work of students with something called *authentic assessment*. Or, maybe another way to look at this is to say that the evaluation must be placed on *real tasks*. For example, if students were studying a particular idea in history rather than give a

multiple choice test over the material, the students would be asked to write a newspaper story about the happening as if they lived at that time.

Or, another way of thinking about the idea of authentic assessment is to have a problem presented and have the students decide what should be done. Again, it is not a pencil and paper test, but a real task. For example, in a course that is called Global Studies, the students were required to design a trip to China. The purpose was to determine whether they had learned from their reading the most important things about the country.

Then, larger questions arise. For what travelers? With what budget? What must the tour designers accomplish? The students were finally told to be travel agents and develop an extensive brochure, fully researching the cost and the logistical information using computers to determine what could be offered for such a trip. (Wiggens, 1994, p. 207-208). In summary, the idea in the classrooms in the United States today is to make certain the assessment is authentic. It is the same in assessing teachers; we ask the student teachers to complete 16 weeks of practice under the watchful eye of a cooperating teacher. Middle school teachers complete eight weeks in middle school (ages 11-15) and eight weeks in secondary schools (ages 16-18).

Teacher Assessment

The University of Northern Iowa's student teaching program is built around the concept of continuous evaluation. Our students have completed three and one half years of coursework to become a teacher with a bachelor of arts (B.A.) or bachelor of science (B.S.) degree. During the final semester, i. e. 16 weeks of study the student teaching [one who is learning to teach] semester, the student is placed with a cooperating teacher in the public schools. The cooperating teacher [a public school teacher] and the university coordinator [a person like myself who has a Ph.D.] will be responsible for evaluating the student teacher. We work as partners in the assessment process.

It is extremely important that the cooperating teacher and the university coordinator share in the continuous evaluation of the student teacher. Systematically observing, analyzing and reflecting on collected data and providing feedback to the student teacher are the most important responsibilities a cooperating teacher has during a student teaching experience. The cooperating teacher helps the student teacher reflect on teaching effectiveness and the

development of self-evaluation skills. The cooperating teacher will hold daily informal conversations with the student teacher as well as a more formal weekly conference. The university coordinator will provide a midterm evaluation, a final conference and two complete observations of the student teacher's work in the classroom.

Eleven Categories of Assessment

The following eleven categories are used to determine if the teacher is meeting the requirements to become an effective teacher. At the mid-term conference the cooperating teacher and the student will complete this form to determine if they agree that the student teacher is making satisfactory progress. The university coordinator listens carefully to the cooperating teacher's assessment of the student's progress.

The areas are included on the sample form that I have given to you; I regret that it is not translated into Chinese for you. Perhaps,

_____will assist me in doing this.

The areas are marked on a scale of U = Unsatisfactory; CO - Competent, and O= Outstanding. The student must meet the concept of competent to outstanding to be considered as passing the course in student teaching and be ready to become a licensed teacher.

The eleven (11) areas are:

1. **Knowledge of Content and Skills Areas**. This means the student teacher understands the basic concepts, principles, processed and relationships in the subject area(s).

2. **Knowledge of Learners/Learning Process.** This means that the student teacher knows the developmental characteristics of individual learners and has an understanding of groups. Understands factors affecting learning and processes bringing about learning outcomes.

3. **Use of Instructional Planning Strategies**. The student teacher takes actions to develop plans to bring about particular learning outcomes for learners. All of the students have been trained in the Madeline Hunter Lesson

Design. In the Appendix of this paper, I have provided an example of a Lesson Design that a student teacher would give to me using the Madeline Hunter Lesson Design.

4. Use of Instructional Strategies/Teaching Styles. The student teacher takes actions to adapt teaching styles and learning resources to the needs of pupils. For example, in the United States at Middle School the teachers are in teams so there will be a team responsible for the students' learning. A team of four teachers -- social studies, English, math and science will plan together how to teach a lesson. The instructional strategy may be cooperative learning where the students will sit in groups of four to explore a concept.

5. Use of Management and Discipline Strategies. This is the most difficult area for teachers in the middle school. We have many strategies for the teacher to use to maintain an effective learning environment. We check to see if the teacher provides fair, effective and consistent classroom control.

6. Use of Communication Strategies. In this category we are checking their oral and written communication skills. We are also interested in their ability to ask questions that are effective in gaining needed information from others. We would want to know if they use Bloom's Taxonomy in asking questions.

7. Use of Assessing/Diagnosing/Evaluating Strategies. In this category the student teacher must show that they are able to recognize a problem for the learners exists. The student teacher must also determine what may be causing the problems and what might be done to solve them.

8. Use of Motivation Strategies. We analyze here to see if the student teacher takes actions to arouse and sustain the interest of the learners. Do they use devices that appeal to learners? For example, when teaching a lesson on cells in biology, if the students do not seem interested, we expect the teacher to change the motivation strategies from a lecture to what we call a "hands on" lesson. A "hands on" lesson would mean that the students in the classroom would examine polluted water, spoiled pasta, and different plants to begin to recognize the importance of cells. After the students are interested, then we would teach the lesson.

9. Use of Problem-Solving/Decision Making Strategies. This category examines whether the teacher studies situations from various perspectives, is appropriately decisive and copes with decisions and problems related to instruction. We are looking for teachers who inspire students to think independently, and who help students learn to solve problems on their own.

10. Use of Human Relations Strategies. In this category the student teacher is evaluated on his/her ability to promote feelings of worth in individuals and promote productive interaction among learners. Because the United States is a nation of cultural diversity, we feel that it is important for all children to see themselves in the curriculum, on the bulletin boards and in the textbooks. We want them to be proud of their background and to have respect for other people.

11. Professional Characteristics/Personal Qualities. We believe we can teach teachers the skills of 1-9, but it is in category 10 and 11 that teachers show their particular abilities. The personal characteristics of enthusiasm, hard work, initiative, dependability, and sense of humor are all part of the personal qualities we look for in good teachers. We also expect them to exemplify role awareness and responsible ethical conduct. In addition, we believe that teachers who are professionals will relate well to others. To be competent in this area we would expect the student teacher to work with poise and self-confidence and to serve as a positive role model.

Final Evaluation Procedures

The mid-term evaluation is only for the student teacher, the university coordinator and the cooperating teacher to see. The final evaluation becomes a part of the official credentials for prospective teachers. There is a final conference for the purpose of discussing the evaluation with the student teacher. In addition, the cooperating teacher writes a six paragraph narrative that addresses the following issues about the student teacher's competency:

1) Classroom setting. Describes the student teaching environment.

2) Special skills and competencies. Describes special skills the student teacher has.

3) Classroom management. Describes the student teacher's ability to establish rapport with pupils and how effective were his/her classroom management skills.

4) Areas needing improvement. Describe any weakness the student teacher possesses.

5) Character and personality. Describes characteristics that may make this student a good beginning teacher.

6) Prediction for success. Give a professional opinion as to the probably success of this student teacher based on personal growth and professional development.

Finally, it is important to compare the student teacher to other teacher candidates at the completion of their student teaching experience; in other words, the student teacher is evaluated as a beginner and not as the master teacher that their cooperating teacher represents. While some student teachers are capable of teaching at a demonstrated level of master teacher, most will lack that level of experience.

Licensure and National Board Standards

Now you have completed your student teaching at the University of Northern Iowa and you are ready to receive your teaching license. Each state in the United States has different license requirements. The University recommends you for licensure if you have passed the student teaching semester. In addition, the United States is currently developing a National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. National Board Certification is voluntary, but it will be a symbol of professional teaching excellence. (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, p. 1).

The National Board outlines its work on the concept: **What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do**. The Board

sets forth five propositions that are believed to be the core of accomplished teaching.

1. Teachers are committed to students and their learning.

2. Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to diverse learners.

3. Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.

4. Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.

5. Teachers are members of learning communities.

Summary

Good teachers are always aware of the process of instruction --how a lesson is going, who's having difficulty, who's paying attention, how a certain group is working --and adjusts their instructional plans and activities accordingly. (Herman, 1992, p. 6). We believe that student teachers are capable of learning these things. The difference in today's setting as we prepare teachers is that we have carefully outlined what we believe *teachers must know and be able to do*. National Board assessment is a developing field in the United States; we are learning with our students how we can assist them to become the best teachers possible.

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Wiggins, G. (1993). Assessment: authenticity, context, and validity. *Phi Delta Kappan,* 75, 3: 200-213.

What teachers should know and be able to do. National Board for Professional Teaching Standards: Washington, D.C.

NAME:
SUBJECT AREA: Computers
GRADE LEVEL: 7th
UNIT: Research Skills

LESSON #1

OBJECTIVE: After playing the game Carmen Sandiego, students will be able to correctly name the location of the thief, using research skills, problem solving skills, and historical knowledge.

Purpose: Students will see that research can be fun and satisfying. They will learn problem solving skills and cooperation by working in groups. This lesson might also motivate student to work independently with educational software.

MATERIALS: Overhead Projector
Transparencies with clues
Evidence Worksheets to get Warrants
Warrant worksheets ad warrant cards
Carmen Sandiego installed on the hard drives
Dictionary

ANTICIPATORY SET: *(3 Minutes)*

1. Have you heard of the Computer Game "Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego"?

3. There is a new game out called "Where in Time is Carmen Sandiego?" –Allows players to: investigate different eras and time periods in 12 different countries – it is a Simulation

4. You will have the opportunity to play this game today, first on paper and then at your computer!

OBJECTIVE: *(2 Minutes)*

By the end of this game you will be able to correctly name the location of the thief using research and group processing skills. You'll learn how helpful it is to share ideas by working together.

This is important because throughout your entire educational and perhaps in your professional career you will need to look something up or find out some specific information about a person, place, or thing. If you can learn to enjoy the research process and find the satisfaction in learning something new, you will be much more successful.

INPUT: *(10 Minutes)*

1. Introduce the materials to be used:

1. Game clues – on transparencies
2. Dictionary references – Pass out
3. Warrant Information – Pass out
4. Chief of Detectives – front of class – will issue warrants

2. Explain the game process

3. Possible locations on Assignment Sheet

4. Show Assignment sheet on overhead

MODELING: *(10 Minutes)*

1. Play one round of Carmen Sandiego with class

   A. Begin by putting 1st location and time on line 1 on warrant sheet

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING: *(3 Minutes)*

Ask if there are any questions on the game process
Summarize procedure

GUIDED PRACTICE:

1. Divide class into teams – explain you can use time and country more than once

2. Students play second round *(10 Minutes)*

   Circulate among students
   Listen to discussions

3. Review answers and explain how you selected each destination and time period

4. Assign students to computers in pairs – have them double click Carmen Sandiego and begin round 3. (This time the computer will issue you a warrent when you think you have identified the suspect.) *(10 Minutes)*

5. Circulate among students – assist when necessary

CLOSURE: *(1 Minute)*

You can now see that research can be fun and you may want to find some of the Carmen Sandiego games and play with them on the computer

You can make a game out of finding the key and most important points of your subject matter.

INDEPENDENT PRACTICE: *(1 Minute)*

Choose any state in the United States (except Nevada) and write a short 1–Page outline of facts that pertain to that state. (e.g. Location, Bordering States, State Bird, State Motto, etc.) Use at least 2 references, make sure you have the copywrite date, and include them in your bibliography.